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| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice | Occupational Therapy |
| Chinese Medicine | Optometry |
| Chiropractic | Osteopathy |
| Dental | Pharmacy |
| Medical | Physiotherapy |
| Medical Radiation Practice | Podiatry |
| Nursing and Midwifery | Psychology |

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency

Clarification – Allegations in the ABC 730 Program

9 July 2019

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) works with 15 national health practitioner boards for patient safety and public protection.

We deal with concerns about the behaviour, performance or impairment of registered health practitioners which may require regulatory action, because they pose a risk to the public. There are around 740,000 registered health practitioners in Australia and we receive around 7000 notifications each year. We do not deal with notifications in New South Wales.

We assess each notification individually to identify risks to patient safety and respond to all notifications as quickly as possible, depending on the nature of the concerns raised.

When we are approached for comment we aim to be as helpful and responsive as we can be. However, we must comply with legal limits. This often means that we cannot comment on individual matters or reveal information that is not already public. We also cannot undermine the integrity of our investigations.

Complaints in Queensland

All complaints in Queensland are made to the Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO). The OHO keeps all complaints which it deems serious and refers the rest to AHPRA.

If a notification raises issues about possible criminal behaviour, we liaise with the police. Police investigations take priority over regulatory matters. This is to protect the integrity of police investigations and reduce the impact on victims.

As soon as the police give us the go-ahead, we can take regulatory action.

In the case referenced by the 730 Program, in the face of our proposed regulatory action, the practitioner decided to surrender their registration. This means they cannot practise as a doctor anywhere in Australia.

Although the police have closed their investigation, our inquiries continue.

We recognise that our communication with the notifier was not good enough and we have apologised to her.

Investigator workloads

We have improved our operations and increased our staffing in the past 18 months. The usual caseload for our investigators is now between 25 and 30 matters at any one time.

In 2018/19 we received 7,807 new notifications, which represented a 14% increase on the number of notifications received in the previous financial year.

We have increased our staff numbers, with 362 staff working nationally on notifications and offences, in response to this growing demand and we continue to make changes, including introducing new, national models of working.

Claims by Mr Gardner are being dealt with in the Federal Circuit Court. Therefore, we are not able to make any comments on specific issues.

For more information

- Patients and members of the public with concerns about the care they receive from individual practitioners can call AHPRA on 1300 419 495 or lodge an [online enquiry form](#).
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 03 9275 9009 (overseas callers).
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 920.